

AMENDMENT(S) TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of creating network printer ports on a computer workstation, said computer workstation having an operating system that includes a print subsystem, comprising the steps of:

providing a network;

5       communicatively coupling said computer workstation to said network via a first network interface device;

communicatively coupling at least one printer to said network via a second network interface device separate from said first network interface device;

10       said computer workstation itself performing both printer discovery and network printer port creation on said computer workstation by the steps of:

transmitting a discovery packet from said computer workstation to which only a printer of a designated type can respond;

15       receiving by said computer workstation a response packet from a first printer of said designated type, said response packet including printer-specific network information of said first printer of said designated type;

identifying by said computer workstation whether a network port exists on said computer workstation for said first printer of said designated type; and

20       if no such network port exists on said computer workstation, then automatically creating a first network printer port for said first printer of said designated type on said computer workstation based on said printer-specific network information for said first printer of said designated type.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of initializing a port monitor on said computer workstation upon a loading of said print subsystem, said port monitor performing each of said transmitting step, said receiving step and said identifying step.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said operating system is a Windows operating system.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein said Windows operating system running on said computer workstation includes a print spooler for initializing said port monitor and for performing said creating step.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said print spooler receives said printer-specific network information for said first printer from said port monitor.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said printer-specific network information includes a TCP/IP address of said first printer and a MAC address of said first printer.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said discovery packet is a propriety broadcast message to which only said printer of said designated type on said network will respond.

8. (Currently amended) A method for performing both printer discovery and automatically creating network printer ports on a computer workstation coupled to a network, comprising:

5       said computer workstation performing printer discovery and sends a discovery packet to which only a printer of a designated type coupled to said network can respond;

          receiving by said computer workstation a response packet from said printer thereby identifying said printer as being of said designated type, said response packet including printer-specific network information of said printer;

10       identifying by said computer workstation whether a network port exists on said computer workstation for said printer; and

          if no such network port exists, then, said computer workstation creating a first network printer port for said printer on said computer workstation based on said printer-specific network information for said printer.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said printer-specific network information includes a TCP/IP address of said printer and a MAC address of said printer.

10. (Currently amended) A method of automatically creating a network printer port on a workstation that performs device discovery and is connected to a network, comprising the steps of:

- 5           providing a Windows operating system at said workstation, said Windows operating system including a print subsystem;
- providing a Windows print spooler at said workstation having an Add Port mechanism;
- providing a port monitor at said workstation;
- 10          invoking said Windows print spooler at said workstation to initialize said port monitor; and
- upon initialization of said port monitor, said port monitor at said workstation sending a proprietary broadcast message to which only each printer of a designated type on said network can respond, said each printer of said designated type responding to said proprietary broadcast
- 15          message with a unique data packet including printer-specific network information;
- said port monitor at said workstation receiving said printer-specific network information; and
- for each identified printer of said designated type for which no port exists on said workstation, said port monitor invoking said Add Port mechanism of said Windows print
- 20          spooler, and thereafter,
- said port monitor at said workstation passing said printer-specific network information to said Windows print spooler at said workstation for creation of said network printer port on said workstation.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said printer-specific network information includes at least one of a TCP/IP address and a MAC address.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of invoking said Windows print spooler of said workstation to initialize said port monitor at said workstation to send said proprietary broadcast message from said workstation to which each printer of said designated type on said network can respond occurs when said print subsystem is loaded by  
5 said workstation.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein said computer workstation performing said printer discovery sends said discovery packet as a propriety broadcast message to which only said printer of said designated type on said network will respond.

14. (Canceled) The method of claim 10, wherein only said printer of said designated type on said network will respond to said propriety broadcast message.